

# Inkshed

Volume 14, Number 5, July 1996

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*Inkshed* provides a forum for its subscribers to explore relationships among research, theory, and practice in language acquisition and language use. Subscribers are invited to submit informative pieces such as notices, reports, and reviews of articles, journals, books, textbooks, conferences, and workshops, as well as polemical discussions of events, issues, problems, and questions of concern to teachers in Canada interested in writing and reading theory and practice.

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Fees support the Inkshed Publishing Initiative and on-going organizational expenses.

**Please Note: This fee structure will likely change as of January 1997.**

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## The Contents of this Issue: A Recap of the Inkshed 13 Conference

It has now become a tradition (this being the second year) to include photographs taken at Inkshed Conferences in the summer issue of Inkshed. Thanks this year go to Barbara Rose and Pat Sadowy for catching these photo ops.

This year's conference at Hecla Island was a tremendous success: thanks to Pat Sadowy, Sandy Baardman, Amanda Goldrick-Jones, Laura Atkinson, Debbie Radi, Neil Besner, and Joanne Freeman-the two teams from the U. of Manitoba and U. of Winnipeg sure know how to "throw a conference." Wonder when they'll volunteer to do it again?



As for the Inkshed 14 organizers, here's two of them: Marcy Bauman and Roger Graves, along with Debbie Radi.



As well as photos, another important tradition has been established at the annual conference-a mascot. Our first mascot was Bambi: actually it was a (dead) baby deer in a jar (one of many specimens scattered around the University of New Brunswick's Forestry School where Inkshed 12 was held.) At Inkshed 13 we found another animal who seized our imagination-and this year at least our mascot was alive!

Can you spot the Goose in this Photo?



For a similar challenge check out the Find-the-Spam Web site at: <http://sp1.berkeley.edu/findthespam.html>. Keep in mind that this is not easy-since September 25, 1995 the Spam has been found by only 141,562 players and missed by 44,529.

In short, this issue includes:

- \* photos,
- \* the minutes of the CASLL meeting,
- \* an excerpt from Doug Brent's hypertext talk (online in text as well in its true hypertext form),
- \* Susan Drain's and Kenna Manos' dialogue on the rhetoric of business as used in universities-including excerpts of the Inksheds which were written after their presentation, as well as excerpts from the CASLL listserv which circulated online,
- \* a list, compiled by Margaret Procter, of some of the references alluded to in the other talks (while a hard-copy of these talks isn't available in this issue, we hope that the other speakers will consider sending us a version of their paper for publication. Russ Hunt's talk "Affordances and Constraints of Electronic Discussions" is available online at <http://www.StThomas.ca/hunt/hyprnews.htm>),
- and, finally,
- \* a preliminary announcement about Inkshed 14-which promises to be another excellent conference.

And as for the last page: it's a deliberate "rip-off" of the satiric announcement the Textual Studies in Canada editors put out to promote its issue on academic conferences. (And, of course, all the people in the pictures really were at the Inkshed 13 conference in Manitoba...)

Mary-Louise Craven  
Co-editor

### Request for Back Issues

In the October 94 issue, I asked Inksheddors to send me back copies so that we could have a complete set of our newsletter. No one replied, and I didn't pursue it, but Kevin Brooks has informed me that he is anxious to have back copies for his dissertation research. (I have copies from the McGill days but before that I have incomplete years.)

Would anyone who has early back copies, please get in touch with me. I'll xerox them and return them.  
- Mary Louise Craven

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## **Preliminary Announcement Inkshed 14: "Reading Technologies"**

We mean reading in at least two senses:

- 1) in the strict sense of the kinds of technologies available. What kinds of technologies to deliver texts now exist, and what new technologies are emerging as a result of computer networks?
- 2) in the sense of how **we** read those technologies. How do the technologies we use when we read texts (whether those texts be in a book, journal, magazine or newspaper, or on a computer screen) affect and shape how we write? How does the technology affect or determine who gets to read and write, whose voices are valorized?

Inkshed 14 will be a conference where participants will have access to and be encouraged to use as many technologies as we can make available.

**It will be held at Geneva Park, a (low-cost) resort north of Toronto on the first weekend in May, 1997. More details (and pictures of the site) will be in the October *Inkshed* .**

prepared by Marcy Bauman

(other members of the Inkshed 14 organizing committee include Russ Hunt, Roger Graves, Andrea Lunsford, Margaret Procter and Mary-Louise Craven)

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## **WHAT WE READ: Books Mentioned at Inkshed 13**

These are some of the books and articles mentioned in talks at Inkshed 13 (with a few guesses to fill in incomplete notes). Comments and corrections welcome.

Adler, Peter. "Transitional Experiences," *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* 15: 4 (1975): 13-23.

Bazerman, Charles. *Shaping Written Knowledge: The Genre and Activity of the Experimental Article in Science*. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1988.

Burke, Kenneth. *Attitudes Toward History*. Vol. 2. Boston: Beacon, 1961.

Bush, Vannevar. "As We May Think." *Atlantic Monthly* July 1945: 101-108. Also online at [<http://www.isg.sfu.ca/~duchier/misc/vbush/vbush-all.shtml>].

Cameron, Anne., e.g., *How Raven Freed the Moon*. Madeira Park, BC: Harbour, 1985.

Hearn, Judith. *Trauma and Recovery*. New York: Basic, 1992.

Heim, Michael. *Electric Language: A Philosophical Study of Word Processing*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1987.

Leontiev, Alexei A. *Psychology and the Language Learning Process*. Ed. C. V. James. Oxford: Pergamon, 1981.

Lunsford, Andrea. "What Matters Who Writes? What Matters Who Responds? Issues of Ownership in the Writing Classroom." *Kairos* 1:1 (Spring 1996). Online journal [<http://english.ttu.edu/kairos/1.1/features/lunsford.html>].

Negroponte, Nicholas. *Being Digital*. New York: Knopf, 1995.

Norman, Don. *The Psychology of Everyday Things*. New York: Doubleday, 1990.

Purves, Alan. *The Scribal Society: An Essay on Literacy and Schooling in the Information Age*. New York: Longman, 1990.

Selfe, Cynthia. *Critical Perspectives on Computers and Writing Instruction*. New York: Teachers College Press, 1989.

Stoll, Clifford. *Silicon Snake Oil: Second Thoughts on the Information Highway*. New York: Doubleday, 1995.

Tuman, Myron. *Literacy Online: The Promise (and Peril) of Reading and Writing with Computers*. Pittsburgh: U of Pittsburgh P, 1992.

Waring, Marilyn. *If Women Counted: A New Feminist Economics*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988.

Compiled by Margaret Procter

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### **CASLL Annual General Meeting**

Hecla Island, Manitoba, 5 May 1996

Present: Jo-Anne AndrFigure 1, Laura Atkinson, Sandy Baardman, Ann Beer, Gloria Borrows, Doug Brent, Rebecca Cameron, Geoff Cragg, Mary-Louise Craven, Susan Drain, Janice Freeman, Amanda Goldrick-Jones, Roger Graves, Betty Holmes, Lynn Holmes, Russ Hunt, Fay Hyndman, Kenna Manos, Cynthia Messenger, Valerie Vanstone, Barry Nolan, Margaret Procter, Debra Radi, Barbara Rose, Pat Sadowy, Leslie Sanders, Barbara Schneider, Rhonda Schuller, Stan Straw, Dena Taylor.

1. Moved by Leslie Sanders, seconded by Geoff Cragg, and carried: to approve the minutes of the second annual general meeting (Alberta, May 1995) and the change to fees based on the calendar year.

2. General expression of thanks for organizing the 1996 conference to Sandy Baardman and Pat Sadowy (also to Amanda Goldrick-Jones, Stan Straw, Janice Freeman, Neil Besner, and Barry Nolan). Prolonged applause.

3. Election: Nominated by Doug Brent, acclaimed: Joanne AndrFigure 1 as member-at-large. Nominated by Stan Straw, acclaimed: Kenna Manos to continue as financial officer.

4. Reports:

a) Report of Financial Officer (Kenna Manos): Kenna circulated a financial statement and noted that five new memberships had been added. Moved by Doug Brent, seconded by Leslie Sanders, and carried: to start the financial year with the calendar year beginning in January 1997.

b) Report on Inkshed Publications by Sandy Baardman: Sandy explained that the original fee plan had been set up to supply members with two publications yearly. Two books were published in 1993-4, one in the 1994-5 season with another forthcoming, and one is forthcoming for the 1995-6 season. Now membership has dropped, the cost of publication has nearly doubled, and the funding from the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba has been cut. There is insufficient money in the financial statement to cover a second publication in 1995-6.

Two motions were presented as a package, discussed by members, and voted on separately:

i. Moved by Sandy Baardman, seconded by Russ Hunt, and carried: that Inkshed Publications no longer be committed to produce two publications yearly, but that it retain its status as an occasional publisher. Discussion focussed on the need to obtain subvention from funding agencies such as SSHRC.

ii. Moved by Betty Holmes, seconded by Marcy Bauman, and defeated: that the membership fee be reduced to \$20 yearly. Moved by Leslie Sanders, seconded by Geoff Cragg, friendly amendment by Ann Beer, carried: that the fee be reduced to \$20 yearly, or \$10 yearly for students and the underemployed. Discussion focussed on the need to encourage attendance at Inkshed conferences by underemployed members and graduate students, and the executive was asked to use membership fees to support attendance at Inkshed conferences as well as to support publications.

The executive will use a mail-in ballot with 30 days' notice to amend the constitution to include the above changes.

c) Report on Inkshed Newsletter: Mary-Louise Craven reported that York University would continue to support production of the newsletter for another year, but that she needed help with editing it. Margaret Procter has agreed to help co-edit. Of the 250 CASLL members, 109 have not paid their fees; their names have been taken off the distribution list. The newsletter is available on the Inkshed Web site at York. In discussion, members suggested that the Web site could include more resources, and could become a forum for members.

5. Announcement: Margaret Procter encouraged members to attend the upcoming conference of the Canadian Association of Teachers of Technical Writing as part of the Learned's at Brock University. One of its themes will be writing centres.

6. Discussion of plans for the Inkshed 14 conference: Russ Hunt and Marcy Bauman (with help from Mary-Louise Craven, Margaret Procter, Roger Graves, and Andrea Lunsford) are looking for a site in Southern Ontario within a two-hour drive from Toronto. They will attempt to keep costs at the low end and find ways to subsidize students and the underemployed. They want also to provide more time to read participants' texts and allow for multilinear discussion. The Inkshed newsletter will ask for more discussion on conference plans. A question about the date led to a suggestion to avoid holding the conference on Mother's Day, 12 May. Thanks were offered to the organizers.

7. A general motion to adjourn.

Minutes submitted by Margaret Procter

**Please note: A ballot will be mailed to all CASLL members in the fall Inkshed issue to vote on the changes to the CASLL constitution.**

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## **Buying In or Selling Out? Institutional Literacy and Institutional Survival**

A Dialogue with Kenna Manos and Susan Drain

[picture]

*Kenna Manos and Susan Drain re-enacting their dialogue for us at the conference*

Preamble:

In order to forestall legislated amalgamation or closure, the presidents of the universities located in Halifax attempted to demonstrate to the Nova Scotia government co-operation and potential savings. A Business Plan, presented to the Minister of Education in December 1995, was signed by all partner institutions: Atlantic School of Theology, Dalhousie University, University of King's College, Mount Saint Vincent University, Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Saint Mary's University, and Technical University of Nova Scotia. The plan, with some changes, has since been approved by Cabinet.

K. Is this rumour true? Did you really have a hand in writing this-this-business plan?

S. "Having a hand" is too strong. It was written by the guy the partner universities hired to co-ordinate the partnership efforts, with help from our University researcher, who was volunteered. When it came to our Senate, quite a few comments were passed about its failure to represent academic concerns, and I was volunteered to assist in the next draft to reflect some of those concerns.

K. If you weren't a friend, I'd say you did a pretty lousy job . . . look at this document. It begins with stress on "student-focused education", but within a couple of paragraphs, potential students are being referred to as "targeted groups" and "future market . . . development."

S. Now, just a minute. I'm not taking responsibility for the whole thing. And if you think this is bad, you should have seen it before I got involved!

K. But just look at the "Mission Statement": the first thing it says is that the mission is "to secure cost savings and new sources of revenues for the Metro universities." Only after the money point's been made does it refer to the Consortium's intention "to promote the enhancement of teaching, research and graduate studies, through co-operative initiatives between or among partner institutions."

S. Well, Kenna, it is a "business" plan: it's about the business of running universities, rather than about what universities do. I mean, it's exactly like those things that would-be entrepreneurs are supposed to take to the bank manager: a "business plan" that shows the manager how they'll find markets and promote their product and what their costs will be. The bank manager is chiefly interested in the rate of return on the bank's investment. The manager doesn't really care what the entrepreneur does, as long as someone out there is prepared to buy it.

K. But universities aren't businesses: they're fundamentally different from businesses! Their goals are different, their motivations, their methods, their standards of excellence—all different. Opposite, in fact. Remember John McMurtry's article in the Journal of Philosophy of Education, the "Education and the Market Model" one.

S. I'm not saying that universities are businesses; I'm saying that the dominant ideology of our time is a business one—the market model. McMurtry reminds us that there has always been a "conflict between the claims of education and inquiry, on the one hand, and the demands of ruling interests and ideologies on the other"(209). Educational institutions survive by negotiating the conflicts.

K. This isn't negotiation; this is buying into the whole business of business. We now talk about "acquiring knowledge", with acquiring in its financial sense, as John Ralston Saul claims: "Knowledge is owned and controlled, bought and sold in a corporatist society" (42). If we don't resist, the same thing will happen to us as Conrad Russell says has happened to British universities: we'll be driven by a "centrally imposed ideology" of efficiency, with its twin demands of customer satisfaction for students and high productivity for faculty.

S. Now that's a slippery slope fallacy! But I don't think that's what going on when people like me take crash courses in business literacy. I see universities needing to preserve their space in a very hostile world, a world very much devoted to the "bottom line" and "return on investment" and all that business business. The Halifax business plan is very much a way to get the government off our backs: we sell the business plan to the government, and then we've bought ourselves time and space to carry on our academic business.

K. Susan—your language! You're "selling" and "buying" and "businessing" like the compleat capitalist. But universities aren't going to bank managers for loans.

S. No, but we're going to governments who more and more behave like bank managers whose customers have overspent their credit limits. Governments have abandoned the discourse of social responsibility and the common good, and have adopted the discourse of business and entrepreneurship. It's the dominant discourse: when you go to talk to the guys in power, you talk the talk. I could translate what I said a minute ago into academic jargon easily enough: instead of buying time and space for our academic business, I'd talk about preserving institutional autonomy and academic freedom. That talk is fine inside the academy, but they don't hear it outside. So the universities need diplomats and envoys who speak the foreign language.

K. A matter of external relations... Is that why the Mount appointed a former Shell executive to be the university president? So she could talk the language of the corporate world?

S. Bluntly, yes.

K. And that accounts for the fact that senior administrators sound more and more like private sector corporate executives? They may not necessarily be wannabe or ex-corporate executives, but they do have to sound like them, if they're to be heard in those circles.

S. That's what I'd say.

K. And by extension, anyone speaking for universities to the outside world, any lobbyist, will have to be literate in that discourse? That explains the NSCUFA/CONSUP/ACOA report.

S. Remember that Inkshed literacy doesn't include Nova Scotia acronyms.

K. Sorry. Let's see: NSCUFA (the Nova Scotia Confederation of Faculty Associations) did the report. It was jointly sponsored jointly by CONSUP (the Council of Nova Scotia University Presidents) and by ACOA (the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency). The sponsors are steeped in business discourse; no wonder, then, that the report talks about the "economic sense" of getting a university degree.

S. It's not just who's speaking, here, but who the audience is, don't you think? The study is "an assessment of the economic, social, and cultural impacts of Nova Scotia Universities". It's meant to persuade the public and the government they elect that universities are important in the scheme of things that the public and governments have deemed important. These days, that's "economic impact." The vibrancy of social and cultural life nurtured by universities gets a much smaller share of the 160 pages.

K. Let me just quote this bit, though. Let me remind you that they're talking about individual students getting an education, here. Confess, doesn't it make you shudder?

The individual looking at a decision to invest in human capital would be considering lost income, higher living costs, tuition and direct costs for books and equipment. The annual total would be \$12,577 for males and \$8,819 for females (reflecting lower incomes for high school educated women.) Making appropriate adjustments for timing, risk and investment opportunities, the rates of return on that investment would be 5.25% for males and 7.04% for females. (2)

S. Well, it's not how I made the decision to go to university, but then the economic situation was quite different in 1968. I suspect that there's much more of this sort of calculation now, particularly among adult students-those life-long learners we deal with. It's just practical. For lots of people, going to university isn't the result of an intellectual hunger or some burning desire for personal development. It's a desire to succeed in terms of the dominant ideology, that is, to succeed materially.

K. Since I teach at the College of Art and Design, I'm mostly dealing with people who already know that the kinds of things they are interested in are never going to give them immense material success. The stereotype of starving artists in garrets, and all that stuff. But how do you cope with all those would-be consumers?

S. Well, they aren't all self-described investments in human capital. Lots are, of course, and they apply to our professional programmes-business, public relations and so on. I try to subvert them of course. That's what arts electives are for -even in business administration.

K. So you read the NSCUFA report as an attempt to persuade the public that it's not wasting its money on a degree.

S. And the government, too. There's a calculation of the government costs and benefits of investing in a four-year degree: the government did even better than the individual, as I recall.

K. Here it is: "Government's rate of return: males, 7.99%; females, 12.5%" (2). That's straight business-speak, and more and more, business-speak is government-speak. But does it have to be academic-speak? Look at that article on the importance of tenure and research in Nova Scotia Universities, the one written by the NSCUFA executive director and the Technical University prof. Doesn't the title say it all? "Maintaining Quality in the Knowledge Industry." Listen, just listen-and this is our side talking:

*It is useful to think of Nova Scotia's 500 schools, colleges and universities as parts of the knowledge industry. After all knowledge is a product that is bought and sold. The knowledge industry affects us all. Like any product that is bought*



*and sold, knowledge must be produced and improved. If knowledge is not developed, it quickly becomes dated. Like yesterday's VCR, yesterday's computer, or yesterday's medicine, yesterday's knowledge is undesirable, not competitive and useless to our customers.*

S. I'm flinching, I'm flinching. But I'm not the audience, am I? It was written for the local newspaper. It's another lobbying effort, another piece of public relations, trying to convince the world at large that even when I'm in the garden at eleven a.m. on a Friday, staring at my crocuses and anemones, I'm really working on research. This paper, in fact. Among ourselves, academics don't talk about the "knowledge industry".

K. You didn't hear our president the other day; "We have to shift our perspective to 'This is a province that sells knowledge'," she said, "rather than one of 'education costs'."

S. Well, that's what NSCUFA keeps telling the government: don't put education under the heading of "social programme spending"; put it under the heading of "social investment." At the funding forum the other week, though, the education minister was talking about "strategic investment" in education, so maybe they're beginning to see universities as more than a vast expense, a sacrifice to be offered up in the name of deficit reduction.

K. But Susan, our president was talking to us. To the faculty. To the students. It would have been bad enough, if I hadn't seen the same day a billboard for cellular telephones, proclaiming "they don't cost; they sell." The art college and the cellphone company are supposed to use the same language??! And to use it uncritically, without the scarequotes: "knowledge industry," out-of-province students as "export earnings." Or the graduate co-ordinator of Dalhousie's English Department, talking to all the Halifax English faculty. There were no scare-quotes when he said "Our graduate programme is not cost-effective," or when he asked, "Given the current economy, what is the value of a graduate programme?"

S. Well, we have to challenge it, then. The Canadian Association of Chairs of English last year explicitly called for "close, critical analysis of the documents by which governments determine educational policies". That's what ACCUTE's president did with the strategic plan for education produced by BC's Ministry of Skills, Training, and Labour (incidentally, perhaps we should be grateful that we still have a minister of education in Nova Scotia). Glenn Deer did it in his article "The Rhetoric of Education Reform" in Inkshed in February. Even if we concede that business discourse is a necessary evil when dealing with a business ideology, we'll have to be wary that it doesn't contaminate our intellectual discourses.

K. But contamination took place when the various Senates endorsed the Halifax Universities Business Plan with its money-driven mission statement. The academic policy-makers condoned that language and that set of values.

S. I did manage to get the word "academic" into the Vision Statement. It was otherwise complete bumph: "The vision is of a consortium that is academically strong, vibrant, fiscally responsible, intellectually dynamic and, most importantly, student focused." No values at all, just feel-good stuff. I can just picture the minister and the consortium: "I love it when you talk tough."

When I brought our Senate's concerns to the seventh revising session, the ex-bureaucrat who was drafting the plan said, "they won't hear you if you talk like that." I said, "The faculty won't support it if you talk like that."

K. What chance is there, then, of achieving what the Chairs of English called for, when they said we have to "challenge the government rhetoric ... so as to develop a shared language in which to collaborate"? And don't you, by the way, think it odd that the very same Chairs' report goes on immediately to talk about "the instrumental value of university courses and programmes"? Isn't that a sell-out?

S. I think they thought they were "buying-in" rather than "selling out," but it only confirms to my mind the impossibility of a shared language of collaboration.

K. So we consciously use their language when we talk to them, and we challenge every use of their language when we talk to one another.

S. Sure. Literacies are plural, we Inkshedders say. We have to be literate in different discourses and in different

rhetorical situations.

K. But language changes what we say; it isn't neutral. Prksen has a nice phrase for it: "words are the everyday prisms of perception" (4). Translating is interpreting, and interpretation is about values. That's why it's so dangerous if the dominant rhetoric of the outside begins to pervade the academy. Especially those "plastic words" that Prksen identifies: "One could call these words the master key to the everyday. They are handy, and they open doors to enormous rooms. They infiltrate entire fields of reality, and they render that reality to their own image" (4). Or perhaps we can license our administrators and some others to use it outside-like when you went to the forum on funding.

S. I felt like such a fake-prating about strategic investment and targeted funding and extra-formula grants. At least when I was with the other faculty reps, I could put the scare- quotes back around the terms like "accountability" and "micromanagement". But as long as I feel like a fake, I can console myself that I haven't been entirely co-opted; unlike the British universities, in Maureen McNeil's analysis, we haven't fully internalized and institutionalized the market mechanisms.

K. "But above all/ Always above all else: how does one act/If one believes what you say? Above all: how does one act?"

S. What?

K. You know, that Brecht poem, "The Doubter" I'm always giving my students.

S. So we come right down to an issue of personal integrity and responsibility.

K. And ironically that's the heart of the whole "Brecht controversy": the accusation of complicity, the charge that Brecht was a collaborator (and not in our sense); that he wrote odes to Stalin in order to keep the Berliner Ensemble going.

S. And we're in danger of a similar complicity? We won't be able to reconcile what we do and what we say, if we say different things to different hearers, different things every time we speak? At the funding forum, the universities called upon the government to be clear about what it wants, "to say what it funds and to fund what it says". We can't even say what we do, and do what we say, if we have to switch discourses, acquiring fake literacies in order to survive.

K. Is it any more fake than that other discourse we've both used-the language of collective agreements and economic benefits? We've talked that talk and we've walked that walk, too, even on the picket line. We've managed to keep two different structures and two different discourses co-existing on the same campuses: structures of collegiality and intellectual enquiry as well as structures of employee/employer and workload and compensation. Look what's going on right now in our own departments: we're talking collegiality while ignoring our complicity in the exploitation of our part-timers.

S. What McMurtry says about the fundamental opposition of education and the market model ought to make us leery of our faculty associations as well as of our business plan and university consortium.

K. In fact, it ought to make us leery of ourselves.

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### **Excerpts from the Inksheds Written after the Session with Kenna Manos and Susan Drain**

You can't just adapt your discourse to the needs/whims/language/predispositions of your audience. That traditional and naive idea of audience analysis is not persuasive. It is ineffective precisely because it gives all the power to the audience. Nor can you ignore the audience altogether and disregard significant differences between yourself and your interlocutor. This, too, is non-persuasive and anti-dialogic. Bakhtin shows us over and over that dialogue occurs in the intermingling of perspectives, language and intuition. Dialogue happens when everything becomes deeply "intermingled." So, you can't reduce the choice to buying in or selling out. You can't just "speak their language" or make them speak ours. There's no dialogue in the model, no persuasion, no sharing (or even negotiating) of power. But, of course, "they" don't want dialogue, communication, or even sharing of power. If we are the weaker power, we have to create the model for the blending of the two voices-and we have the intellectual resources and the rhetorical experience to do that. Let's use it. - **Sandy Beardman**

Increasingly, my students speak of their education in investment language. I keep hearing the cliché from them: "the more you learn, the more you can earn." In fact, whenever I meet a student who is genuinely interested in the contemplation of ideas, I want to give her the opportunity to make a class presentation on the subject. . . . Many [students] even see these [writing] courses as having a negative impact on their overall investment because they are the only courses which will not guarantee them a healthy dividend (at least a B+).

- **Janice Freeman**

It's not just universities whose faces (and minds, and souls) are being changed by having to speak in what has become the overwhelmingly dominant public discourse: arts organisations, social welfare institutions, hospitals, granting agencies . . . all of them, in order to continue even a marginal existence, have to prepare this corporate face in order to meet the faces that they meet. How did we lose this battle? When there wasn't even a battle? Rhetoric's supposed to be our turf, but the Newts and the Rushes took it right away from us. . . . Captain English won't get us out of this one.

- **Russ Hunt**

I think that these clashes between economic realities and academic/pedagogical ideals are even worse for the many part-time, sessional, and contract workers among us than for people in positions of authority. We may lose our jobs if we don't provide measurable contributions to productivity. Let's at least know how to measure-and explain-what it is we teach people.

- **Margaret Procter**

. . . we are always already complicit in a compact with the government funding sources and the middle class taxpayers. . . . The only difference is that we are being made aware of that complicity, and that awareness forces us to make a decision: admit that we are and want to remain part of the middle class or gut the system and set up alternative schools

. . .

- **Roger Graves**

From the president's office on down come memos, letters, outlines of strategic plans. Scariest of all are the Annual Reports-thick and glossy, full of photos of the President with one or another executive of a corporation. They are always shaking hands and smiling in self-congratulatory ways. I thumb through it only a moment as I rush off to complete my rationed photo copying, or check my e-mail on my sad, slow 286, or teach my class of 39 students. . . . And as I've said to other colleagues at work, I don't have time to rock the boat 'cause I'm too busy rowing it, trying to keep it afloat.

- **Pat Sadowy**

Or-are we just deluding ourselves that our ways, the old ways, are the best ways? Scary thought-are we like Plato going down kicking and screaming that oral discourse is the only way to preserve philosophical values, already recreated by the new modernist values of writing even while refusing to trust them? Have we already been recreated by economic discourse? And-spooky thought-is that all bad? I certainly think so, but what if that is just me trying to preserve a position of personal privilege. Floating high on a raft of academic values above the sea of economic reality that everyone else must swim in?

- **Doug Brent**

I think the consumer model has wide acceptance because then the student is never "at fault" if she/he does not do well in a course.

- **Leslie Sanders**

It seems to me with the integration of business schools, normal schools, and medical rehab. programs into the universe of the university, we've already bought into an economic/capital notion of education. When there is no significant liberal arts and science component in a university program (as there is not in many professional programs), is it still a university?

- **Stan Straw**

It is essential, I believe, to be as honest with ourselves as we can. If we do something for "strategic" reasons, at least we should not start lying to ourselves that is for some higher good. And if we refuse to act strategically, and stand on principle, then we should recognise that others (students, part-time staff, support staff) can often suffer for the sake of us preserving our cherished integrity.

- **Ann Beer**

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## **Are We in the Market? CASLL E-mail Excerpts**

This electronic exchange (much cut here) took place in the shadow of Kenna Manos' and Susan Drain's conference presentation. It began with Michael Hoehsmann's posting of an article from the May 4 Globe and Mail on the possibility of private universities for Ontario. The article quoted James Downey, vice-chair of the Council of Ontario Universities, saying that he didn't fear or object to private universities: "I can't believe there's any money to be made in universities by the private sector," Downey said. "If there's a need for that and such an institution can compete with us successfully, then more power to them."

**Roger Graves:** I work at a private university in Chicago. . . . I guess you could say that I work in a place that has been thoroughly "marketized." Is it a bad thing? Well, I don't think so-the place really responds to student needs, because if we don't our compensation goes down immediately (salary, travel money, etc.) Do the students rule the academic side through demand too? I haven't seen that; the equivalent of the provincial departments of education in Illinois makes us submit proposals for change to them just as it does with the state institutions, and the same certification bodies evaluate both private and public institutions. I want to correct one problem with the news story, though. Something like three-quarters of our students are first generation university students and are drawn from very diverse cultural groups. These are not "rich" students: They are, however, people in debt up to their ears. The issue here is that the burden of paying for the system is being switched from the general government fund to the user (and immediate benefactor) of the system. I don't know if it is good or bad, but I am convinced that the future of university financing is going to come from "selling" programs to people willing to pay for them.

**Brenton Faber:** As Roger seems to suggest (if I can put keystrokes in his computer), the issue is not so much "whether or not scholars participate in the market" as "how we will negotiate the demands of the market within our scholarship."

**Marcy Bauman:** Creating programs that the public will pay for seems like a two-edged sword to me. One troubling aspect of that approach is that we're in danger of losing the concept that an education isn't something you buy; it's something you buy the privilege of pursuing. It's not a simple case of "you get what you pay for." And that's the point at which I think we need to leverage our rhetorical savvy.

**Jamie MacKinnon:** I don't get it. Some of the recent postings about markets, privatisation and universities seem to posit a "marketplace" that is alien, separate, and inhabited by some other tribe. Where is this place? How does one stand away from or above it? I would think that any person who wants to receive money for using his or her wits (e.g., a professor or teacher) is standing right in the hubbub of a large market. . . . We live in a marketplace, a place of perpetual exchange. I think it behooves us to better understand our place within it.

**Richard Coe:** As Jamie's header [Rhetoric, Place, Markets] makes clear, the "market" question is rhetorical, not factual. Is a university (or a hospital or another public sector institution) really LITERALLY a marketplace? No. Does it have certain features that are very like a marketplace? Yes.

**Russ Hunt:** (in reply to Brenton Faber): "The language of business and the marketplace has until quite recently) always been our language." I'm sorry, but this seems to me just flat wrong. Maybe I'm missing something. That language is a strikingly modern invention. . . . The language of the bottom line, of economic efficiency, of the trial by market, has not, at any rate, been my language. It's a language which presumes a whole set of values, not many of which I want anything much to do with. . . . It's true that if we don't embrace "market discourse" we're at a disadvantage, because that discourse has become the unmarked form (why else is the only public issue the deficit?). But to say that the only way to construct ourselves in other environments is to do so in that discourse is to assert that exactly the issue Kenna and Susan presented so neatly is irrelevant. The question is what damage does adopting that discourse do: the answer, in my view, is rather a lot. And I think Kenna and Susan made it clear we'd better find an alternative.

**Jamie MacKinnon:** With regard to Russ's last posting, how can a teacher not be a peddler? Anyone who receives money from someone else is peddling, no? It seems to me that Russ wants to disassociate himself from the hurleyburley of commerce, but still get a check from-whom? Any why, if not for the "wares" he's peddling? . . . With regard to Rick's posting, I would say that a university (or any locus of learning) is not "like" a market. It's in, it's part of a larger market of ideas and exchange, monetary and otherwise. To insist that universities are somehow separated from commerce and the larger market of ideas and alternate teaching / learning foci is wrong-headed and wrong.

**Richard Coe** (in reply to Jamie MacKinnon): First, to be literal, a peddler is an itinerant merchant-who doesn't "get a check" (i.e., a salary), but lives by selling merchandise at a price higher than he or she paid for it. An investment capitalist isn't a peddler, a feudal lord collecting his tithe isn't a peddler, a factory worker isn't a peddler (though, as Marx emphasised, she or he is selling/renting labour power by the hour), nor is a store clerk, nor is a prostitute, nor is an actor. Thus we are dealing with a metaphor. That one must do something perceived as socially necessary labour (Marx again) to "get a check" is assuredly true. Thus we all have something in common with peddlers (and prostitutes, hence the commonplace metaphor that we all "peddle our asses."

**Brenton Faber** (in reply to Russ Hunt): English literature and the study of language does pre-date Matthew Arnold. As Foucault notes, perhaps we need to re-read our Sophists . . . and consider the ways in which modernist aesthetic language has constructed (what R. Coe noted-see previous messages) arbitrary metaphors isolating "art" from the "market"-really a very recent invention, considering.

**Cathy Schryer:** I feel a little late joining this discussion. However, I wanted to throw my two cents in (to continue the economic metaphor). As I have listened to the discussion, another set of metaphors has occurred to me. It seems to me that Susan and Kenna were echoing two distinct "fields" (Bourdieu's metaphor). These two fields have somewhat distinct forms of capital associated with them: different registers, different genres and therefore different orientations

to space and time. The field of education has always assisted in the development of cultural and symbolic capital. . . . Different fields are in constant competition with each other. And right now it seems as if the field of business is appropriating or colonising much of the discourse (and therefore ideology of the field of education).

**Doug Brent:** (in reply to Cathy Schryer): Much of the problem seems rooted in a misunderstanding of the question of who benefits from education. If we adopt the capitalist discourse, it would follow that the person who benefits from a service should pay for it as an investment against future rewards (better job, etc.) Even if this discourse is generally correct (a big if), it presumes that the individual student is the main benefactor of education. The benefits to society as a whole of having a more educated populace as a whole are not even considered. If they were, it would follow that society as a whole ought to help pay.

**Michael Hoechsmann:** One thing that I think is missing from this (very interesting) discussion is a consideration of the changing nature of the global economy, the declining influence of the nation state and the exponential growth of a global corporate shadow state. . . . One final point: in regard to the existence of private universities in the US, let's not forget that our distinct national institutional matrices arose in a different historical period. If private universities in the US are effective, sometimes even better than public ones, we cannot necessarily assume that the Canadian public system would benefit from privatisation at this time (and under the tutelage of our current governors).

**Henry Hubert:** I thank Michael Hoechsmann for his timely reminders/analyses of the current state of economic concerns relating to education. I think many of us must begin to respond publicly to the unfair battering education is taking these days. I guess I'll write my letter to the local editor tomorrow-after I've marked my latest round of papers from the summer school course I'm teaching.

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## Reading and Writing on the Web: What Would Plato Say?

I first presented the following sequence of lexia (independent but linked units of prose) at Inkshed 13. I wanted to talk about hypertext, but couldn't get my head around talking about hypertext in a linear-sequential manner. I hit on the clumsy but interesting strategy of writing up the entire presentation as fifty overhead transparencies. I would present on and the audience decide which one they would go to next. Thus, in proper reader-response fashion, they constructed their own text from the do-it-yourself parts I provided. As with all do-it-yourself projects, they had a number of parts left over, and went slightly crazy trying to make a sensible argument from the branching paths. But it certainly was an even more "collaborative" hypertext than usual.


As a writer, I found the experience enlightening. I got a taste of the process a reader goes through in trying to decide which link of a hypertext to follow. I was also frustrated that the argument didn't seem to be developing the way I wanted it to. "Dammit, why don't they pick Lexia 33," I would catch myself saying. "There's some really important ideas there-I hope they don't miss them." I suppose this illustrates my point: all reading is creative misreading in some sense, but the degree of creative misreading invited by hypertext puts rhetorical interchange in real jeopardy. Or maybe this is just a papyrocentric attitude.

Anyway, when you read the following small selection of lexia, be aware of the alternate paths you could choose. If you want to see the whole 50-node monster, it's on my Web page at:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/~dabrent/mystuff.html>

- Doug Brent

### Map of Excerpted Lexia

[Editor's Note: Represented in this hard-copy format using Inspiration software. The complete, original version can be found at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/~dabrent/mystuff.html>.] 

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## Stinkshed

Satire? You be the judge



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